

Making Great Communities Happen



Connecticut

Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association

Government Relations Chairman: Christopher S. Wood, AICP
Phone: 203 558-0654 woodplanning@charter.net www.ccapa.org

March 18, 2009

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Informational Hearing on the State Plan of Conservation and Development

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association has over 550 members who are municipal and consulting planners, land use attorneys, citizen planners, and other professionals engaged in planning and managing land use at local, regional, and State levels. The Chapter has long been committed to assisting the legislature and State agencies with developing and furthering responsible growth management principles. We appreciate your invitation to participate in this discussion about the State Plan and its role in establishing development policies in Connecticut.

CCAPA has supported the efforts of this Committee over the past five years to refine and improve the State's approach to planning for responsible growth. The most recent attempts to define consistency among the three levels of planning required by Statute incorporated the growth management principles developed in the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan that was approved by the Standing Committee on Planning and Development in 2005.

CCAPA offers two general observations for your consideration of opportunities to further smart planning to meet responsible growth management goals.

State/Local Plan Consistency

Our first comment pertains to the organization of the considerations, objectives, principles, and recommendations that constitute the statutory guidelines for State and local plans. The insertion of the six growth management principles into CGS §8-23 and §8-35a (applying to municipal and regional plans respectively), and by implication into §16a-27, is only the latest in a series of additions and amendments to plan requirements, considerations, and options. These revisions have resulted in a disjointed set of guidelines that frustrate the consistency goals that are clearly warranted. State Plan requirements in CGS §16a-27 are quite different from those applying to municipalities in §8-23. Even the names of the State and local plans are different.

Planning and Development Committee
March 18, 2009
CCAPA Comments

The growth management principles adopted in 2005 provide the overarching strategies for promoting what many are calling "smart growth." What is required to implement these strategies is smart planning, which includes coordination of planning for consistency across all levels of government, both horizontally and vertically. Attached to these comments is an organization of the statutory guidelines and requirements under the six growth management principles in CGS §8-23. If all of the statutes guiding planning were organized in this fashion, with additional specific policies and preferred growth management strategies as determined appropriate, the determination of planning consistency would be greatly facilitated.

State Plan Implementation and Interim Revision

The second general area we offer comment on is the implementation and interim revision of the State Plan. As the Committee clearly recognizes, the use of the State Plan for State agency decision making has created significant concerns in several municipalities. Often, the State and local plans are not consistent with respect to specific land use goals, resulting in administrative decisions that may be contrary to a town's carefully crafted development goals.

CCAPA, OPM, and DEP have recognized this problem and organized a working group to identify solutions. It is our understanding that OPM intends to devise mapping and descriptive information that will be responsive to local concerns and provide better guidance to State and local decision makers. CCAPA will continue to support the State agencies on this and similar matters.

We also understand that the process for interim revision of the State Plan is a complex and challenging responsibility of the Standing Committee on Conservation and Development. While we do not have any specific suggestions at this time, in general we believe that the streamlining and consistent organization of statutory plan requirements and the efforts now underway by OPM and DEP to improve the State Plan interpretation will help reduce the need for interim plan revisions.

Conclusion

CCAPA believes the Committee has made significant progress to promote smart planning by the State, its municipalities, and its planning regions. Clearly, however, the statutes that provide planning guidance would benefit from reorganizing, streamlining, and consistency, in addition to the ongoing review for the incorporation of contemporary planning theory.

CCAPA remains committed to providing this Committee, the General Assembly, and the Administration with objective professional support and assistance on these and related matters. We thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this discussion.



Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association

State, Regional, and Municipal Plan of Conservation and Development Guidelines Organized by Growth Management Principles and Current Statutory Guidelines and Requirements

Growth Management Principle #1: Redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.

§8-23 Required Considerations and Guidelines and Optional Recommendations for Regional and Municipal Plans

- Develop policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality
- Provide for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets, sidewalks, multipurpose trails and other public ways as appropriate
- Identify areas where it is feasible and prudent to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns and land reuse,
- Recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes and include a map showing such proposed land uses
- Provide recommendations for airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds; the general location, relocation and improvement of schools and other public buildings; and the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes

§16a-27 Required Considerations and Delineations for State Plan

- Identify major transportation proposals
- Identify economic and community development needs and patterns of commerce
- Identify areas where it is prudent and feasible to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development patterns and land reuse
- Connect infrastructure and other development decisions
- Promote development that minimizes the cost of new infrastructure facilities and maximizes the use of existing infrastructure facilities

Growth Management Principle #2: Expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs;

§8-23 Required Considerations and Guidelines and Optional Recommendations for Regional and Municipal Plans

- Consider the need for affordable housing
- Consider the use of cluster development and other development patterns to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity within the municipality
- Make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region in which the municipality is located
- Promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs identified in the housing plan prepared pursuant to section 8-37t and in the housing component and the other components of the state plan of conservation and development prepared pursuant to chapter 297. In preparing such plan the commission shall consider focusing development and revitalization in areas with existing or planned physical infrastructure
- Identify the extent and location of public housing projects,
- Recommend the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the municipality

§16a-27 Required Considerations and Delineations for the State Plan

- Provide linkages of affordable housing objectives and land use objectives with transportation systems

Growth Management Principle #3: Concentration of development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.

§8-23 Required Considerations and Guidelines and Optional Recommendations for Regional and Municipal Plans

- Identify areas where it is feasible and prudent to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns and land reuse
- Recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes and include a map showing such proposed land uses

§16a-27 Required Considerations and Delineations for State Plan

- Promote land use and transportation options to reduce the growth of traffic congestion;

Growth Management Principle #4: Conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and existing farmlands.

§8-23 Required Considerations and Guidelines and Optional Recommendations for Regional and Municipal Plans

- Provide strategies for the protection and preservation of agriculture
- Identify the needs of the municipality including, but not limited to, human resources, education, health, housing, recreation, social services, public utilities, public protection, transportation and circulation and cultural and interpersonal communications,
- Provide recommendations for conservation and preservation of traprock and other ridgelines

§16a-27 Required Considerations and Delineations for State Plan

- Identify and promote a State-wide greenways system

Growth Management Principle #5: Protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety.

§8-23 Required Considerations and Guidelines and Optional Recommendations for Regional and Municipal Plans

- the objectives of energy-efficient patterns of development, the use of solar and other renewable forms of energy and energy conservation

§16a-27 Required Considerations and Delineations for State Plan

- Enlarge to include transportation, energy, and air
- Natural hazards risks and potential impacts, with recommendations for future infrastructure and property development to minimize use of areas prone to natural hazards
- Develop a goal for reducing carbon dioxide emissions

Growth Management Principle #6: Integration of planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional and state-wide basis.

§8-23 Required Considerations and Guidelines and Optional Recommendations for Regional and Municipal Plans

- Local plans consider the state plan of conservation and development adopted pursuant to chapter 297 and the regional plan of development adopted pursuant to section 8-35a,
- Develop an implementation plan, including (A) a schedule, (B) a budget for public capital projects, (C) a program for enactment and enforcement of zoning and subdivision controls, building and housing codes and safety regulations, (D) plans for implementation of affordable housing, (E) plans for open space acquisition and greenways protection and development, and (F) plans for corridor management areas along limited access highways or rail lines, designated under section 16a-27
- Propose priority funding areas,

§16a-27 Required Considerations and Delineations for State Plan

- Identify priority funding areas designated under section 16a-35c,
- Identify corridor management areas on either side of a limited access highway or a rail line
- Increase intermunicipal and regional cooperation